

she seyde hym in this wise: Allas, my lord, quod she, why make ye youreself fro to be lyk a fool? forsothe it aperteneth nat to a wys man to maken swiche a sorwe. Yourre doghter, with the grace of God, shal warisshe and escape; and, al were it so that she right now were deed, ye ne oughte nat, as for hir deeth, youreself to destroye. Senek seith, *The wise man shal nat take to greet discomfort for the deeth of his children, but certes, he sholde suffren it in pacience as wel as he abideth the deeth of his owene propre persone.*

**H**IS Melibeeus answerde anon, and seyde, *What man, quod he, sholde of his wepyng stente that hath so greet a cause for to wepe? Jhesu Crist, oure Lord, hymself wepte for the deeth of Lazarus hys freend.* Prudence answerde, *Certes, wel I woot, attempre wepyng is nothyng defendid to hym that sorweful is amonges folk in sorwe, but it is rather graunted hym to wepe.* The Apostle Paul unto the Romayns writeth, *Man shal rejoyse with hem that maken joye, and wepen with swich folk as wepen.* But though attempre wepyng be ygraunted, outrageous wepyng certes is defendid. Mesure of wepyng sholde be considered, after the loore that techeth us Senek. *Whan that thy frend is deed, quod he, lat nat thyn eien to moyste been of teeris, ne to muche drye; although the teeris come to thyn eien, lat hem nat falle; and whan thou hast forgoon thy freend, do diligence to gete another freend; & this is moore wysdom than for to wepe for thy freend which that thou hast lorn; for thereinne is no boote.* And therefore, if ye governe yow by sapience, put away sorwe out of youre herte. Remembre yow that Jhesus Syrak seith, *A man that is joyous and glad in herte, it hym conserveth florissynge in his age; but soothly sorweful herte maketh his bones drye.* He seith eek thus: *That sorwe in herte sleeth ful many a man.* Salomon seith, *That right as motthes in the shepes flees anoyeth to the clothes, and the smale wormes to the tree, right so anoyeth sorwe to the herte.* Wherefore us oghte as wel in the deeth of oure children as in the losse of oure goodes temporels, have pacience.

**R**EMEMBRE yow upon the pacient Job. *Whan he hadde lost his children and his temporel substance, and in his body endured and receyved ful many a grevous tribulacion; yet seyde he thus.* Oure Lord hath sente it me; our Lord hath biraft it me; right as oure Lord hath wold, right so it is doon; blessed be the name of oure Lord. *To thise foreseide thynges answerde Melibeeus unto his wyf Prudence: Alle thy wordes, quod he, been sothe, and*

therwith profitable; but trewely myn herte is troubled with this sorwe so grevous that I noot what to doon. *Lat calle, quod Prudence, thy trewe freendes alle, & thy nage whiche that been wise. Telseth yow cas and herkneþ what they seye in conseil, & yow governe after hire sentence.* Salomon seith, *Werk alle thy thynges by conseil, and thou shalt never repente.*

**H**ANNE, by the conseil of his wyf Prudence, this Melibeeus leet calle a greet congregacioun of folk; as surgiens, phisiciens, olde folk and yonge, and somme of his olde enemys reconciled, as by hir semblaunt, to his love and into his grace; and therwithal ther coomen somme of his neighebores that didnen hym reverence moore for drede than for love, as it happeth ofte. Ther coomen also ful many subtille flatereres, & wise advocats lernid in the lawe.

**A**ND whan this folk togidre assembled weren, this Melibeeus in so woful wise shewed hem his cas, & by the manere of his speche it seemed that in herte he baar a cruel ire, ready to doon vengeance upon his foos, & sodeynly desired that the werre sholde bigynne, but nathelees, yet axed he here conseil upon this matiere.

**S**URGIEN, by licence and assent of swiche as weren wise, uproos and to Melibeeus seyde as ye may here: *Sim, quod he, as to us surgiens aperteneth that we do to every wight the beste that we kan, whereas we been withholde, and to oure patients that we do no damage; wherfore it happeth, many tyme & ofte, that whan we men han everich wounded oother, on same surgien heeleth hem bothe; wherfore unto oure art it is nat pertinent to norice werre, ne parties to supporte. But certes, as to the warissynge of youre doghter, albeit so that she perilously be wounded, we shullen do so ententif bisynesse fro day to nyght, that with the grace of God she shal be soound and sound as soone as is possible.*

**A**LMOOST right in the same wise the phisiciens answerden, save that they seyden a fewe woordes moore: *That right as maladies been cured by hir contraries, right so shul men warisshe werre by vengeance.*

**H**IS neighebores, ful of envye, his fermed freendes that semeden reconciled, and his flatereres, maden semblant of wepyng, and empeireden and agreggeden muchel of this matiere, in preisyng grete Melibee, of myght, of power, of riches, and of freendes, despisyng the power of his adversaries, and seiden outrely that he anon sholde wreken hym on his foos, and bigynne werre.

**P**ROOS thanne an advocat that was wys, by leve & by conseil of othere that were wise, & seide: *Lordynges, the nede for which we been assembled in this place is a ful hevynge, and an heigh matiere, bycause of the wrong and of the wikkednesse that hath be doon, and eek by resoun of the grete damages that in tyme comynge been possible to fallen for this same cause; and eek by resoun of the grete riches & power of the parties bothe; for the whiche resouns it were a ful greet peril to erren in this matiere.* Wherefore, Melibeeus, this is oure sentence. *We conseilte yow aboven alle thyng, that right anon thou do thy diligence in kepyng of thy propre persone, in swich a wise that thou ne warte noon espie ne wache, thy persone for to save. And after that we conseilte, that in thyn hous thou sette suffisant garnison, so that they may as wel thy body as thyn hous defende. But certes, for to moove werre, or sodeynly for to doon vengeance, we may nat demen in so litel tyme that it were profitable.* Wherefore we axen leyser and espace to have deliberacioun in this cas to deme. *For the commune proverbe seith thus.* He that soone deemeth, soone shal repente. *And eek men seyn that thilke juge is wys, that soone understondeth a matiere and juggeth by leyser; for albeit so that alle taryng be anoyful, algates it is nat to repreve in yevynge of juggement, ne in vengeance taking, whan it is suffisant & resonable; and that sheweth oure Lord Jhesu Crist by ensample; for whan that the woman that was taken in avowtrie was brought in his presence, to knowen what sholde be doon with hire persone, albeit so that he wiste wel hymself what that he wolde answer, yet he wolde he nat answer sodeynly, but he wolde have deliberacioun, and in the ground he wroot twies. And by thise causes we axen deliberacioun, and we shal thanne, by the grace of God, conseilte thee thyng that shal be profitable.*

**A**dstirten thanne the yong folk atones, & the mooste partie of that compaignye han scorned the olde wise men, & bigonnen to make noyse, and seyden: *that.* Right so as whil that iren is hoot, men sholden smyte, right so, men sholde wreken hir wronges while that they been fresshe and newe. *And with loud voys they criden, Werre! werre!*

**P**ROOS tho on of thise olde wise, & with his hand made contenance that men sholde holden hem stille, and yeven hym audience. Lordynges, quod he, there is ful many a man that crieth *Werre! werre!* that woot fullitel what werre amounteth. *Werre at his bigynnyng bath*

so greet an entryng and so large, that every wight may entre whan hym liketh, & lightly fynde werre; but certes, what ende that shal therof bifalle, it is nat light to knowe. for soothly, whan that werre is ones bigonne, ther is ful many a child unborn of his mooder, that shal sterve yong bycause of that ilke werre, or elles lyve in sorwe & dye in wrecchednesse; and therefore, er that any werre bigynne, men mooste have greet conseil & greet deliberacioun. *And whan this olde man wende to enforcen his tale by resouns, wel ny alle atones bigonne they to rise for to breken his tale, and beden hym ful ofte his wordes for to abregge; forsoothly, he that precheth to hem that listen nat heer, en his wordes, his sermon hem anioeth.* For Jhesus Syrak seith: *that.* Musik in wepyng is a noyous thyng. *This is to seyn; as muche availleth to speken bifore folk to whiche his speche anoyeth, as doth to syng bifore hym that wepeth.* And whan this wise man saugh that hym wanted audience, al shamefast he sette hym down agayn. for Salomon seith, *Theras thou ne mayst have noon audience, enforce thee nat to speke.*

**S**EE wel, quod this wise man, that the commune proverbe is sooth, that Good conseil wanteth whan it is moost nede.

**E**T hadde this Melibeeus in his conseil many folk that prively in his cere conseilled hym certeyn thyng, and conseilled hym the contrarie in general audience. *Whan Melibeeus hadde herde that the gretteste partie of his conseil weren accorded that he sholde maken werre, anon he consented to hir conseil, and fully affermed hire sentence.*

**H**ANNE dame Prudence, whan that she saugh how that hir housbonde shoope hym for to wreken hym on his foos, & to bigynne werre, she in ful humble wise, whan she saugh hir tyme, seide to hym thise wordes: *My lord, quod she, I yow biseche, as hertely as I dar and kan, ne haste yow nat to faste, & for alle guerdons, as yeveth me audience, for Piers Hifon seith.* Whoso that dooth to that oother good or harm, haste thee nat to quiten it; for in this wise thy freend wole abyde, and thyn enemy shal the lenger lyve in drede. *The proverbe seith, He hasteth wel that wisely kan abyde; and in wikked haste is no profit.*

**H**IS Melibee answerde unto his wyf Prudence: *I purpose nat, quod he, to werke by thy conseil, for many causes & resouns; for certes, every wight wolde holde me thanne a fool. This is to seyn, if I, for thy conseil, wolde chaungen thynges that been ordeyned and*